

June 23, 2024

Honourable Adrian Dix  
Minister of Health  
B.C. Ministry of Health  
EMAIL: [PROREGADMIN@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PROREGADMIN@gov.bc.ca)

Re: Regulating Counselling and Psychotherapy in B.C.

Dear Minister Dix,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my feedback on this issue. First, I want you to know that I am in favour of regulating psychotherapy in BC so that we can minimize the risk of harm to the public that can occur when anyone can call themselves a counsellor. However, I want counselling to be **competency-based** not just academic-based for the following reasons:

- In BC, we currently have a shortage of counsellors and psychotherapists, and this need continues to grow. Limiting the number of people who can become psychotherapists by mandating a master's degree will vastly limit the option for many mature students to join the industry.
- Most master's degrees require a bachelor's degree as an admissions requirement. Most range in cost from \$30,000 to \$80,000 and if a bachelor's degree is added to this cost would range from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This makes it unreachable for mature with life experience, who are balancing family and personal cost and time commitments.
- I do not believe that a master's degree delivers competency just because it is a master's degree. The most important thing is that education must deliver specific course content that will prepare counselling professionals for competent practice, and there must be sufficiently developed supervised practice.
- Diploma programs that are as long or longer than master's degrees and taught by experienced counsellors/psychotherapists can deliver the same level of competency as master's degrees, without creating obstacles for mature students, including marginalized students, to enter the practice.

Minister Dix, I urge you to consider regulation for psychotherapy that is encompassing, affordable and realistic for the adult and marginalized populations of BC to work in. Regulation needs to create entry-to-practice models that don't preclude talented, empathetic, individuals with valuable life and professional experience.

I am currently a Professional Counsellor Diploma student with Rhodes Wellness College. My program consists of 21 courses, and over 1,780 hours of focused training in all areas related to counselling and psychotherapy, including ethics, mental health, and all major counselling techniques such as DBT, CBT, Somatic Therapy, and Narrative Therapy. My program is trauma-informed, and because it is experiential, I have been able to grasp concepts and put them in practice in my own life, in the lives of my classmates, and utilize them to help external clients on a pro-bono basis, under the close supervision of very experienced professional counsellors and psychotherapists.

Upon my graduation, I plan on moving into practice and helping hundreds of individuals per year overcome their mental and emotional health challenges. I do not think I should be precluded from doing this only because my education is titled a diploma versus a master's degree. I have learned and mastered the same subjects, at the same difficulty level as master's students – and my practice-based learning has provided me with on-the-ground experience that will help me make an immediate difference in assisting others upon my graduation. I also will be supervised by other professionals for 1-2 years following my graduation. I hope that I will be given a chance to practice on par with others in the province. I know I am capable of being a valuable member of this incredibly important industry.

Sincerely,

Name and title (add address, email and phone if you prefer)